

WORDS & VISION

UCFV Faculty & Staff Association Newsletter

Vol. 6 No.3

January/February 1999

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Notes & Notices

From the Editor

A Year of Living Vaporously?

First issue — and I want to start by wishing each of you all the best for New Year's. But it feels a bit odd, because 1999, still in its babbling infancy, is already being defined as a sort of non-year — hiccough in time, a hiatus before the truly

big event. Net and print incarnations of the news are seething with millennial speculation, proclaiming what is obviously going to be the biggest global celebration/trepidation ever.

Year 2000: Never has so much been written by so many about, ultimately, so little — premonitions, pipe-dreams, paranoias. What, exactly, does it all mean?

through a few spotty weeks. The Armed Forces, taking it even more seriously, announced Operation Abacus (how droll), to mobilize 30,000 troops over a thirty day period to handle an anticipated anarchic breakdown of Canadian society.

Horrors loom: dire shortages of doughnuts at Tim Horton's, perhaps, no Canadian Tire flyers in the mail, CBC RADIO broadcasting 'Best of Morningside' all day long — or worse yet, no CBC RADIO at all?

May I humbly suggest, just to be on the safe side, that UCFV shorten the coming Fall term, so we can get all the marks processed well before any double digit disaster strikes ... say, by November 15. Special pre crisis-intervention counselors (I'm assembling a short-list) will

The only hard news is the Y2K bug's surprise reanimation as a serious threat to world order. This 'minor glitch', supposedly under control months ago, is now being warned against by apparently sober government agencies (e.g., RCMP) who advise us to stash enough \$20s in a bag, ionized water in jugs, and baked beans in cans (available at quantity discount through the caf) to get

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facilitate our coping with a foreshortened work period.

the crucial details of next New Year's eve. Not surprisingly, most everything's booked. Well, except for Party 2000, the biggest rock n' roll festival ever, happening outside of LA (that quintessentially millennial city), a frolic which — at \$850 a pop for two days of discomfort shared with an estimated 2.5 million unfresh attendees — promises fair to be Woodstock in Hell. Or you might still score tickets for a round-the-world-follow-the-time-changes charter 747 flight, just \$77,000 per seat, complete with on-board orchestra, that will touch down and party hearty on every continent, no doubt to the unbridled delight of a full range of impoverished locals — Hell on wings *and* wheels.

I've nosed around here, and, curiously, not a single UCFVer has fessed up to having any plans to hole up survivalist style, shotgun/banjo in hand, atop a mountain retreat, or, for that matter, to any crazy hijinks pencilled in for Dec. 31st. (Are they holding out on me?) Several playful types have, under duress, admitted plans — to *not* fly and *not* take elevators 'round midnight on that fateful eve. A few wild spirits even boast they intend to shut off any still-functioning lights, bar the doors, retire early with the handiest hot water bottle for company, and damn the consequences.

Does it have something to do with being in Education, I wonder, this lack of *fin de siecle joie de vivre*?

Really Big Night

Coincidentally, that will also

Is it that we are living on a different calendar? I mean, ever since I can remember, 'the year' starts in September and ends in Summer, both in school and, afterwards, in work — as my blood-spattered Weekly Academic Minder attests. Hence, a 'new beginning' in the midst of darkest winter has always collided with the Xmas frenzy rather than signaling a truly significant start-up. (To add to the confusion, my boyhood stomping grounds shared festivities across the Roman and Orthodox calendars, giving us two Xmases, New Years, etc., per season.) At this point, the more seasonally driven Fall/Winter year seems kind of natural to me, tied to cycles of ripeness and renewal. Sure it's weird to *start* a year when everything's dying, but, hey, it's all part of the eccentric charm of academia.

On the other hand, maybe the real reason has more to do with the way that we in Education live — you know, in the timeless realm of ideas. After all, millennia are psychic/spiritual horizons, not mere arithmetic demarcations. This is true despite the perennial and apparently universal appeal of round numbers, like '2000' (please explain, mathematicians). Just as the eventful 60s did not start and end, 1960-1969, so the meaning of the forthcoming millennium is not tied specifically to its actual year/date/moment in time.

Nor should we lose sight of the fact that this is year 4696 on the Chinese calendar, and other

leave more time for working out

un-round numbers in other cosmologies, to be full-mindedly academic about it.

Future Ain't What it Used to Be, or, Blast to the Past

Or is it simply that our hearts have been broken once too often, and we no longer believe in the Future as a collective prognostication of progress? 'New' is running low on positive charge these days; life seems less than refulgent with promise...on all fronts. Certainly we toilers in the fields of Education appear to face tomorrows of diminishing returns: doing-more-with-less directives, demands for productivity/accountability indicators, dwindling academic freedoms, increasingly petrified professional lives, corpulent corporate agendas bulging in the wings, etc.

But to Hell with all that, too. After all, naïve faith in the possibility and potential of change is a defining characteristic of Being (along with perversity, as Dostoevski pointed out). Besides, I *do* remember and know the Future — ah, its fatal beauty! It last appeared, I believe, fleetingly, at the crossover of the 60s and 70s, with the dawning of the 'Age of Something' that left its inherently transformational mark on my soul, before the Dark Days of Disco descended. Remember (or, younger colleagues, imagine): freedom, peace, love, adventure, openness, free big E education for everyone, and all those other good vibrations?

And back then traveling itself

was half the fun, of course. So, if the next twelve months means we are *en route* — either slinking to an Ambiguous Apocalypse,

You can see, gentle reader, whence all this nostalgic referentiality is leading. The entire year 2000 *must* be one long celebration — to obviate the boring 2,000/2,001 debate — and maybe we should kick things off with a costume party for its mythic eve. Not to dress up as monumental personages of the last millennium (e.g., Ludwig II Mad King of Bavaria; Xavier Cugat, *et al.*), though that could be fun, but rather to invite everyone to come as her/his own unique ‘incarnation’ of the Future. Like, I’ll get right to the back of the closet, pull out those faded bellbottoms, tie-dyes, and love beads, and see if I can fit any of them, *or* their attendant patchouli-scented dreams — hey, anybody seen my zircon-encrusted tweezers, by the way? I’ve even got a working turntable, and some of those shiny black vinyl recordings, you know, called ‘LPs’, deeply etched with prophetic tunes like *Purple Haze* ...

In the meantime, welcome to a millennial newsletter look commissioned to commemorate our ongoing willingness to face the ch-ch-changes. Many thanks to Marion Llewellyn of Graphics for the prophetic design. As they used to say — some still do — it’s really cool.

-Richard

Dubanski

slipstreaming to The End, or spiraling into the blinding nova-light of a brilliant New Age, (depending on one’s psychic

orientation) — 1999 looks pretty darn exciting to me.

taking part. We did outline who was and who was not taking part in briefings to the major media.

In identifying only those Locals that would be taking part in job action we followed exactly the same practice used by all other unions in the same situation. I should add that other media, including *The Vancouver Sun* as one example, were aware of the institutions not taking part through interviews with us. They chose to focus on the news story of institutions facing potential job action, not those that were not. Additionally, they showed no interest in other CIEA Locals and non-affiliated unions that were not taking part in bargaining.

I encountered no confusion with media representatives as a result of listing only those Locals taking part in job action. The results of your vote were well known in your institution and in your local media, and I acknowledged this in a respectful manner when being interviewed.

I would be happy to meet with your Executive to discuss this further or to speak directly to the individual involved should you so choose.

In solidarity,

-Ed Lavalley,

(*Ed.: This exploration of both sides of R’n’R in from Bev Lowen who took a few well-deserved days off the battle lines, dated Jan. 31, 99.*)

Letters

(*Ed.: Here’s a copy of a letter from CIEA President to FSA Pres re media coverage of UCFV’s non-strike vote, dated Dec.21, 98.*)

I write to respond to the letter on behalf of your Executive raising questions about CIEA’s communications practices during negotiations for the Provencal Common Agreement. Please excuse the delay in this response.

I regret that one of your members has found cause to take offence at how our releases were drafted. Both CIEA and BCGEU were careful in drafting these releases to make the media aware of those institutions that would be taking part in job actions. We concentrated on those Locals taking job action because we were using the threat of a strike to bring maximum pressure on the employer to settle the dispute. We did not make specific references in releases to the two BCGEU and five CIEA locals, including your own, that were not

Dear Kim, J.R., Fenellie, Martin, David, Dale & Annie,

Hello from beautiful Cultus Lake! Having a great time, wish you were here.

Our suite is really lovely — spacious with large picture windows. We spent two romantic candlelit evenings in

Tomorrow we're off to Vedder Crossing to do a little shopping [WE NEED KITTY LITTER]. It's quite a quaint little place, I've been told.

So far the meals have been great [MCDONALD'S FRIDAY, TACO TIME SATURDAY]. Tonight we ate in; it was delicious [KRAFT DINNER]. We're planning a quieter day Tuesday; with all this excitement, Merlyn's missed a couple of naps.

Miss you all terribly. Give my love to the Deans.

Hugs & kisses, Bev

P.S. Merlyn sends his regards (wag, wag, slobber)

President's Report

It's the mid-way point in the academic year, the time when everything runs at full throttle; strategic planning groups, task forces, and ad hoc committees get added to the ongoing activities that would keep us all busy under normal circumstances (not, it seems to be, that we've

front of a roaring fire [BY THE TIME HYDRO GOT THE POWER BACK ON I HAD TO CHUCK EVERYTHING IN THE FRIDGE AND FREEZER]. We spent most of yesterday taking in the local scenery [CLEANING UP FALLEN BRANCHES, LEAVES, GARBAGE, AND THE OCCASIONAL ROOF TILE BLOWN DOWN IN THE really been able to determine what "normal" is for the past five or six years). My report this month will attempt to summarize the work of the FSA, both internally within UCFV, and externally through our participation in CIEA.

Contract Ratified

After eighteen months of intense work on the part of the FSA negotiating committee, countless memos and electronic communications with the membership, several information sessions and general meetings, votes on whether to join the provincial table, whether to endorse the contract proposals, and the unforgettable vote on whether or not to strike, the FSA membership has ratified a contract with UCFV.

Two hundred and forty-nine members cast ballots and voted overwhelmingly — 94% — in favor of accepting the package which included both the clauses agreed to at the provincial bargaining table as well as those items we negotiated locally with UCFV. I'm sure that you will all join with me in breathing a heavy sigh of relief that this long and involved process has come to an end.

Or has it? Now that we have ratified, a number of items agreed to at the provincial table must

STORM]. It's a balmy 82 degrees [IN THE LIVING ROOM], and Merlyn and I are just heading out to the beach for a leisurely stroll and site sniffing [EVERY GODDAMN TREE, ROCK, HYDRANT, POLE, BUSH, WEED, AND BLADE OF GRASS. IT TAKES 45 MINUTES TO GET TO BUSSWOOD'S PLACE].

be adapted and adjusted to fit us here at UCFV. Regularization, harassment language, prior learning assessment, and how to apply the 2.1% lift to the staff salary scale will all be under discussion over the next weeks. As I outlined in an earlier memo to the membership, the FSA will be working to develop proposals regarding regularization and the staff salary lift, and will not proceed on these before receiving approval from members. The language on harassment agreed to at the provincial table will override any existing policies or contract language, and so this needs to be compared with our current UCFV policy on harassment. My understanding is that if adjustments need to be made, they will be relatively minor. And the whole issue of how prior learning assessment can be incorporated into the standard workload of faculty needs to be addressed. Bargaining may be over, but negotiating the details will continue at least for a while.

I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the tremendous contributions of a number of FSA members in achieving this collective agreement. Moira Gutteridge started out this round of bargaining as our Contract Chair. She attended numerous meetings starting in the summer of 1997 as the provincial table was being formed, and was vocal in representing the interests and

concerns of FSA members as the ground rules were established. Moira was responsible for putting together our local bargaining proposals in the spring of 1998, a job that takes time, patience, and a careful eye on details. She initiated our local negotiations last spring, and

In the fall, Bev Lowen took over as Contract Chair, with the responsibility of coordinating the local negotiations, and overseeing how the provincial agreement would affect the local negotiations -- a huge job. Once the tentative agreement was reached provincially, Bev was responsible for starting up the local talks again, and for bringing the outstanding issues to a conclusion with the assistance of the FSA negotiating committee. Bev had already been very involved as one of the FSA representatives to the provincial negotiations in the spring of 1998, and had spent many days away from UCFV and from home, sitting in hotel meeting rooms with fellow bargainers, ensuring that proposals developed on the union side would work for us here at UCFV.

So Bev has seen this round of bargaining from both the provincial and local standpoint, and the FSA owes her a huge vote of thanks.

There are a number of other individuals whose contributions deserve acknowledgment: Martin Silverstein was the FSA's primary representative at the provincial table throughout the fall, and represented our members' interests both before and after the strike vote; David Morosan put in hours of research and discussion while developing several of the local proposals

by the time we all agreed to take a break for the summer she was able to report that many items had already been settled.

Moira had made it clear for many months that she intended to step down as Contract Chair in June of 1998, and as no one came tabled by the FSA; Robin Anderson and Chris Leach worked with non-regular members to develop proposals that would address some concerns of RPT's; and all the members of the FSA local negotiations committee -- Robin Anderson, Karen Giebelhaus, Moira Gutteridge, Fay Hyndman, Chris Leach, Bev Lowen, David Morosan, Sandy Vanderburgh, Mandy Watts -- volunteered their time, energy, and creativity to the process. On behalf of the FSA, I want to extend thanks to every member of the committee, and to our ever-capable administrative assistant Jacqueline Ritter, who provides support to the Contract Chair position.

I would also like to acknowledge the members of UCFV's bargaining committee: Barry Bompas, Norah Andrew and Don Tunstall, assisted by Nancy Scarrow. As we all moved into uncharted territory with the provincial agreement casting shadows on our local negotiations, they showed good grace and humour while we worked our way through some difficult issues.

Review of Bargaining 1998/99

At our January meeting, the FSA Executive discussed setting up a process to review this whole recent round of bargaining. A number of Executive officers

forward by the Annual General Meeting to take over this position (probably not that surprising given that we were in the middle of negotiations on both the local and provincial front), the Executive appointed Bev Lowen to fill in the gap.

volunteered to be part of a sub-committee to look at this. Expect to hear more about this shortly, as we will be coming to the membership for your views on this bargaining round.

Regularization

As mentioned above, the language agreed to as part of the provincial agreement allows a local union to open up discussions regarding regularization of the person. At the present time, the FSA has no official, membership-sanctioned proposal on this issue. Therefore, the FSA Executive is striking a committee composed of members representing a variety of interest to develop a proposal on this issue. Once the proposal has been developed, we will bring it to the membership for discussion and ratification before beginning our discussions with the university college. If you are interested in this issue, please contact me.

Restructuring the FSA

During the eighteen or so months that I have been FSA President, it has become increasingly clear to me that our present Constitution and Executive structure do not allow the FSA to be as responsive and responsible an organization as it should be. Our current 22-position Executive meets once per month, and tries to pack into a three-hour meeting all of the decisions on

large, policy-related issues as well as on smaller, day-to-day issues. In the meantime the individuals who hold particular positions — the President, Grievance Chairs, Contract Chair, for example — frequently find themselves faced with decisions that must be made in

At our most recent Executive meeting, we struck a committee to look into how we might amend the Constitution and change the structure of the FSA to ensure effective communication with our member constituencies, and to allow for decisions to be made more efficiently by an accountable body. Some of the ideas that have been presented so far include the creation of standing committees (on personnel, grievances, finance, for examples), establishing an Executive Council that would consist of a small number of key positions, and altering the composition of the Executive to allow for more comprehensive representation from constituent groups. But I want to emphasize that these are just ideas, and we would welcome any thoughts that you might have on this matter. Please feel free to contact either me, Ian McAskill, Bev Lowen, David Morosan, Martin Silverstein or Gloria Wolfson with your thoughts.

Regular General Meetings

At our December Executive meeting, Shop Steward Doug Rasmussen (Facilities) presented his idea of holding regular general meetings with the membership, in an effort to encourage members to become more involved in FSA matters, and to encourage better communication between the

between these full Executive meetings, and so spend time running around and consulting with as many Executive officers as is practical in a short time.

And in spite of the large numbers of Executive positions, there are still constituent groups Executive and the membership. Doug made a great presentation, and the Executive liked his idea so much that we are going to test the water and see how the membership feels about this idea.

So mark this date on your calendars: Wednesday, March 24th. The Executive will hold its regular meeting (which is always open to all members) from 2 until 4 pm, and from 4 until 5 we will have a general meeting of all interested members. Before that date, you will receive further information about the format and possible topic/topics for the general meeting, and we will also be canvassing you to see if this is an idea you support.

Labour Management Board

After a long break over Christmas and into January, the fairly new Labour Management Board (LAMB) has begun meeting again. Although we had intended to deal with the topic of evaluations at our January meeting, a number of more urgent matters came up and this meeting time allowed for a discussion of those pressing issues.

Among the topics for future LAMB meetings will be the issues of resolving the status of long-serving RPT's, and identifying and standardizing the evaluation processes followed at UCFV.

within our membership who feel under- or un-represented within the FSA. Recently we have heard comments such as this from regular, academic faculty as well as from those who work in supervisory positions throughout UCFV.

Task Force on Institutes at UCFV

Over the past year or two, three separate proposals have been put together in support of the establishment of separate institutes or centres that would have relationships with academic departments at UCFV, but would be distinctive and somewhat autonomous. The three proposals — the UCFV Institute for Sustainable Resource and Environmental Management, the Professional Management Institute, and the Centre for First Nations Studies — are all very different, but have enough in common that Management asked Karen Evans, Dean of Access and Continuing Education, to strike a task force to look into the whole issue of establishing institutes at UCFV.

The Task Force on Institutes has now met twice. There are three representatives from the FSA on this Task Force: Martin Silverstein, Ernest Kroeker, and myself. While as members of the university college community we are all very interested in the exciting possibilities that are generated by these proposals and others like them, part of our role is to ensure that the establishment of such institutes will be done in compliance with the Collective Agreement, and to ensure that work is done by FSA members, as opposed to contracting out

instructional or other services to outside agencies. The feeling on the Task Force is that we all want to find a way to work together to encourage creativity and initiative while recognizing institutional commitments and obligations, so I am optimistic that there will be something positive coming out of this group.

Training Accord

The first week of January was a very busy one for Trudy Archie, Martin Silverstein, and me. Representing the FSA, we made personal visits to each of the four area MLA's: Barry Penner (Liberal-Chilliwack),

John van Dongen (Liberal-Abbotsford), Mike deJong (Liberal-Matsqui), and Dennis Streifel (NDP-Mission-Kent) to discuss the Training Accord and to present it as a fair and equitable way to allow colleges, and particularly UCFV, to compete for opportunities to provide training to provincial government employees and clients.

The Liberal MLA's had all, to a greater or lesser extent, made very negative public statements about the Accord prior to our visits. In each case when we left, we all had the feeling that our visit had been worthwhile and that the MLA was now aware of the fact that colleges have to be able FSA is engaged in that I have not even mentioned. This is truly a working organization.

There are three months left before the FSA's Annual General Meeting (which will be held on May 5th, in Abbotsford) and four months before a whole new FSA Executive takes over in mid-June.

I have already informed the Executive that I will not be seeking a third term as FSA President, as departmental commitments call me back to my program and students. But in the time remaining I intend to work as hard as I can to carry through the initiatives described above.

-Kim Issac

to demonstrate, through fair competition, that they are capable of providing the training in a cost-effective manner, and will not automatically be granted anything.

That same week, Trudy, Karen Evans, Ron Coreau and I gave a presentation on the Training Accord and what it might mean to our own UCFV people. There was a mixture of attendees from the CE area and from various academic departments that might be interested in bidding on some of the opportunities that may come through this Accord.

If you have any questions about the Training Accord, please feel free to give me a call.

Grievances Ongoing

1. Policy grievance regarding failure to cluster faculty work. The FSA put forward a policy grievance to the president citing the inconsistent application of Article 13.1(a). This article obliges UCFV to create Regular Part-time contracts greater than half-time (RPT>50%) wherever possible.

This grievance, together with work allocation discussions, have initiated the collation of information about the amount of unclustered work in each department, and a commitment by management to share this information with the FSA each semester. Management has agreed that clustering of work has not been undertaken equitably across departments, and has agreed to work toward increasing the proportion of regularized faculty. Management has agreed in principle to provide fractional 'B' contracts in some cases where instructors have served as RPTs for several

Upcoming CIEA Events

The annual CIEA Professional Development Seminar is coming up on Saturday, March 13th. This year the title of the day is Redefining Research: Informing and Improving our Practice, and the goal of the day is to have participants leave the seminar "with an understanding of the varying cultures of research in each of their institutions." Mark the date on your calendars, and watch for more information.

The CIEA Annual General Meeting will be held in Castlegar this year, from Wednesday May 26th until Saturday May 29th. The FSA will be entitled to send eight delegates this year. If you are interested in being one of these, please contact me.

Whew!

This has been a long report, and yet I find myself thinking about all of the activities that the

Faculty Grievance Chair Report

years, yet may not be eligible for a full-time 'B' contract if their work is clustered. The goal of setting a maximum percentage ceiling of course sections in each department to be taught by part-time instructors (with less than 50% contracts) was discussed at bargaining. Management proposed a standard percentage of 20%, to be counted as an aggregate across the institution. This would leave some departments with much more than 20%, others with less. Further, the current proportion of this work institution-wide, is unknown. The FSA agreed to defer this discussion to annual meetings during which the status of each department and their relative regularization rates would be used to construct a priority list for conversions and 4. Failure to assign work to RPT < 50% instructor. Instructor who was entitled to work discovered that the work had been assigned to a newly hired instructor instead. Management argues that changes in course structure disqualified previous instructor. Grievance initiated at Step One.

Selected questions raised, but not (yet?) brought to grievance. Feedback and opinions are especially welcome.

1. What should department/program heads do when anomalous circumstances arise regarding the application of work allocation procedures? The agreement reached through bargaining includes a provision for anomalies to be discussed and decisions about them to be documented and compiled by the FSA and Employee Relations. So, if questions arise or

regularization at UCFV. We have not yet identified guidelines to be used at these meetings for determining when work will be clustered and converted to regular positions.

2. Dismissal of 'B' faculty member without just cause. Employer alleges lack of truthfulness regarding faculty member's reporting of outside work. Grievance initiated at Step Two. Dismissal has been withdrawn. UCFV no longer considers the matter disciplinary. FSA involvement remains on-hold pending informal attempts at dispute resolution.

3. Unfair treatment of faculty regarding allegation of student complaint about instruction. Several discussions about alleged ambiguities are discovered, bring them to the FSA and Employee Relations. We will call a meeting to make decisions about these issues together.

2. The FSA was recently asked to adapt the hiring rules for the regularization of a position for which the incumbent has been working for about four years, and was originally hired by an SAC. The FSA feels that in these circumstances, where the regularization of the position is overdue, UCFV is obliged to honour the seniority of the incumbent. At the same time, other FSA members who may feel they are more senior and qualified for the work have the right to be made aware of the position becoming regularized, and to apply for it. Likewise, other candidates who may wish to become known for future part-time work should also have an opportunity to be identified as

student complaints occurred among management and with students before the faculty member was made aware of the complaint. A long delay occurred before faculty member was informed. The dean then initiated a student evaluation of the faculty member. Evaluation was then canceled after protest. UCFV decided not to formally investigate the student complaints several months later.

The process used by UCFV in handling the complaint has been clarified, to a great extent. Apology to faculty member is forthcoming. Recognition of adverse effect on the faculty member's work environment and related stress has been achieved. Resolution of the grievance at Step One is expected.

on-call employees.

The FSA Executive recommended that a posting be issued for internal candidates only, indicating that an incumbent candidate exists and will be considered for the position. We also acknowledge that if the set of applications does not produce another candidate who might reasonably be expected to contend for the position, that the SAC might choose not to complete the usual SAC process entirely. In this case, it would be important for the SAC to process the applications of candidates who wish to have their credentials judged for the position, and to provide appropriate feedback to them, including the notification of those who are identified as employees on call.

3. Our joint FSA/management labour forum met once in January. The topics most under discussion were i) the state of working

conditions and management-union relations in the aftermath of the crisis in Admissions and Registration early this month, and ii) the content and tone of the FSA newsletter columns submitted in November by the grievance chairs.

With regard to the first topic, it was acknowledged that the current implementation of the new computerized records system contributed to several of our FSA members being placed in untenable working conditions. This was true for "front line" service personnel; it was likewise true for the FSA members who were involved as supervisory personnel. The FSA contends

However, for the individual whose career or emotional health is choked by an unsolved problem, an emotional outpouring is not uncommon or unreasonable. We (Bev and I) face this regularly. And, when these problems occur and recur, without the acknowledgment of those in charge, there is a greater emotional reaction. But, at UCFV the response to present conflict has not always been direct and constructive. As a result, many employees will no longer make these emotional reactions known to their supervisors. Management persons are astonished, I think, to hear that their employees are afraid to voice criticism, or to even assert their rights. As grievance chairs, we are astonished at their astonishment because this fear is so prevalent. This, too, is part of the meaning of desperate messages from grievance chairs.

And, there is another message

that many of the problems are long-standing ones, and have long been known to management. It was generally agreed that actions are required; among those actions will be the provision of additional personnel.

The second topic elicited an apparent disheartenment on the part of management (this is my perception; management persons' comments were deftly diplomatic about this) that the words used in grievance reports were so direct and editorial (my words, again).

I will report some of my contribution to this discussion. First, it is obvious that calm, diplomatic discourse is generally preferred, and not only for its credibility factor. Secondly, here, also expressed at the meeting. As this group of disengaged, dissatisfied members grows, and the efforts of the FSA to represent them are seen to be futile, it becomes impossible for us to function as a single, united union. I have heard several persons express confidently that if this issue was put to a vote, the membership would choose to divide into multiple unions. I have also heard quite confident predictions that it would not. I am sure only that neither view has any real basis for confidence, since accurate opinion polling is virtually impossible. But, it seems clear to me, after 20 months as a grievance chair, that an increasing amount of energy is being spent on employee relations problems, and that a high level of dissatisfaction with the results of this energy remains. The FSA will try to address our part in this problem through a review of our structure and constitution, with the aim of providing representation to constituents who

however, there is meaning to a message expressed in a more desperate tone. It is a desperate message. Our members too often endure violations, not just of their employment rights, but also of their rights to be free from discrimination, harassment, and other arbitrary biases. The grievance chairs have been working, primarily in diplomatic ways, toward the goal of developing clear policies which are consistently administered and publicly monitored. The hot list of issues needing these policies includes evaluation procedures, hiring and promotion decision criteria, work allocation, and the use of discipline. Currently, progress is being made on some of these issues.

feel under-represented. The desperate tone of our messages is also fed by the real possibility that these attempts of ours to address the problems of disaffected employees may not be adequate.

-David Morosan

Staff Grievance Chair Report

Grievances - the more things change, the more they stay the same

Work load, failure to appoint internal candidates, and inaccurate pay group placement are recurring themes as far as staff grievances are concerned.

Workload

UCFV has experienced considerable growth and change in the last several years, yet the staffing levels in some crucial areas did not keep pace. This has meant huge increases in workload for the existing Staff in departments such as Cats, the Bookstore, Janitorial, Shipping and Receiving, Admissions and Registration, and others. And although UCFV did address the problem in some of these areas, others were left to just shoulder the work and get on with it.

Late one Friday afternoon a few weeks ago Kim Isaac and I met with many of the Chilliwack and Abbotsford A&R Staff. The discussion focused on their serious workload problems — due mainly to under-staffing — and poor working conditions. The following Monday Kim and I presented Management with a synopsis of the concerns raised at the meeting along with demands aimed at rectifying the problems both in the short and long term. To date Management has acknowledged there are critical problems in the area, and has

promised to take steps to improve working conditions. The FSA is

closely monitoring the situation, and has assured A&R employees of our full support in helping them work through this.

Failure to appoint internal candidates

I find it really hard to accept that UCFV so often overlooks existing employees in favour of external candidates when filling positions. I am not suggesting that for every posting there is a qualified internal applicant, but in many cases there is and yet UCFV fails to promote them. It's not as though once some one is promoted they are in the position for life whether they can do the job or not. Article 14.4 clearly states that if a Staff employee is promoted into a new position s/he will serve a non-initial probationary period of six months. If, at the end of the probationary period, UCFV finds an employee unsuitable due to unfavourable evaluations, Management has the right to return the employee to her/his former position or another position in the same pay group. It's fail safe, so what's the problem? Why is the grass so often greener on the other side? Why is it that UCFV insists on interviewing external candidates even when a posting is supposed to be internal and not meant for the general public? Hiring outside people is always a bit of a gamble, so why doesn't UCFV take a chance on an existing employee more often? If the internal choice is a mistake there's always the option of re-posting.

A case in point is a someone I'll call Jean. Last year Jean applied for a senior non-teaching Faculty position but did not get an interview. Less than a year later she applied to, and was hired for, an almost identical position at UBC. I

pose the question:

If Jean is good enough for UBC, then...?

Fortunately this is one problem area in which we managed to make some improvements in the latest Collective Agreement. We now have a new Selection Advisory Committee policy outlining procedures for carrying out SACs. The policy contains language that reads, 'If there are a minimum of four internal candidates who meet the essential criteria they will be considered to constitute the first round of interviews'. I am hoping this statement will improve our members chances for promotion here at home.

Inaccurate pay group placement

I am still hearing a lot of complaints about inaccurate pay group placement. I believe that much of this stems from two things: 1) that many job descriptions still do not accurately describe the positions being rated, and 2) that our new job-rating system does not have a way of measuring workload.

Before continuing I want to emphasize, this is not the fault of JCAC. JCAC rates positions according to a formula set out in the Staff Job Evaluation Plan manual. In a situation where employees Bill and Bob have basically the same job but Bob has a far heavier workload than Bill, JCAC can not arbitrarily award more points to Bob. It

By the time this goes to print we will have ratified — at least I'm assuming we will ratify

just doesn't work that way. Workload issues are a problem that the area supervisor and Dean must take care of. Employees who find it impossible to get their work done in the hours allotted, or who are on medication to help them cope with their jobs, should discuss the problem with their area supervisor or Dean, or both. If the situation is not addressed at that level, then please come to the union.

A job description must be written by the employee. Who better knows exactly what a job entails than the person who is actually doing the work? It is not until a job description is completed to an employee's satisfaction that it should be submitted to the area supervisor for approval. If the supervisor does not agree with the job description it may be that the employee has some how assumed duties that s/he is not expected to do. In that case the employee should cease performing those duties and eliminate them from the job description. If, on the other hand, an employee is expected to perform duties that the supervisor refuses to allow in a job description, the employee can do one of two things: 1) continue to do work that is not in their job description and not be recognized or compensated for it, or 2) refuse to do any work that is not in their job description and cannot reasonably be done under the heading of 'Other related duties'.

It's the employee's choice. No one can be disciplined for not — the combination provincial and local tentative agreements. Only about fifteen members attended

performing work that is not in his or her job description.

-Bev Lowen

It is not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly, who errs and comes up short again and again because there is no effort without error and shortcomings, who knows the great devotion, who spends himself in a worthy cause, who at the best knows in the end the high achievement of triumph and who at worst, if he fails while daring greatly, knows his place shall never be with those timid and cold souls who know neither victory nor defeat.

-Theodore Roosevelt

Contract Chair Report

Negotiations - will they never end?

each of the two forums held on the 20th and 21st of January. I'm not sure why there was so little interest,

it could be for a number of reasons. I'd like to believe it's because the agreement is so good, and the information package, distributed prior to the forums, so clear that members are happy with what we got and have very few questions. I suspect, though, it's because the membership is just sick and tired of hearing about bargaining. After all we've been at it for almost a year. There's no doubt many of you are thinking that for all the time and effort expended very little was achieved. And I gotta tell ya, I feel the same way.

However, the agreement we fought so hard for is typical of the present political climate.

Even though provincial and local negotiations have concluded, there is still a lot of work to do. As per the Common Agreement (Provincial table stuff), within fifteen days of ratification the FSA must inform the employer that we wish to begin talks on regularization. We will be asking the membership for input as to how we should proceed from there. As a collective we may choose to change our present language on regularization, or we may decide to leave it as is. Either way, the process will be conducted democratically. We will also be asking our Staff component for suggestions on how to best apply the 2.1% lift which Staff, along with Faculty, will be receiving April 1, 2000. The Faculty lift was not applied evenly through out the pay scale. Rather, the bulk of it was applied to the top step — the idea being, with a few exceptions like Lab Instructors, that every one will eventually get there, thus almost every one will benefit. This of course would

Other public sector unions bargaining under the same 0/0/2 constraints as public post-secondary, didn't do any better. Government, with a mandate to be fiscally responsible, is not putting any new money into education and health care, and because almost every issue brought to the bargaining table has monetary implications, there wasn't a lot to work with. Nonetheless, we did manage some positive results with the re-allocation of resources in the form of the Training Accord and Pension Accord.

The Training Accord allows the college/university-college

not work with the Staff pay scale because Staff do not move up through the scale to the top step, instead, we advance only to the top of our group. In fact, there is no one in groups 13 and 14, the top groups of our pay scale. There are probably many ways in which the 2.1% could be applied. I am hoping that as a group staff will decide to apply the lift in such a way that the majority will receive the maximum benefit. Again, this process will be conducted democratically.

One issue we have been neglecting for a long time, which is directly related to bargaining, is the tidying up our Collective Agreement language. A joint committee must be formed to address all contradictory and unclear clauses, (preferably a small committee rather than a large one - the larger the committee the harder it is to get anything done in a timely manner). This is especially important now that we have a combination Common and Local

sector to bid on government contracts that have, for the last several years, been going to the hundreds of new private trainers in BC. Winning some of these contracts will put additional funds into public post-secondary education. Unfortunately, though, almost all of it will be soft money with no guarantees for the future. The Pension Accord offers improved early retirement incentives to college/university-college Faculty employees 55 and older. The theory is that because new hires are paid less than retiring instructors at top of scale, each early retirement will save the system \$12,000.

Agreement.

The times they are a'changin'

As you may already be aware, the way in which local negotiations were conducted this year was quite a departure from the UCFV norm. Moira Gutteridge handled the FSA side of things through spring and early summer and I took over when talks started up again in the fall. Moira, who has been our Contract Chair for years and seen us through many rounds of bargaining, was quite frankly just getting tired of the whole thing, and did not want to run for the position again last May. She did agree though, to continue her participation on the bargaining committee until negotiations concluded. Changing Chairs in mid stream is unusual in itself, but I really caused a stir when I asked Linda Sperling, our CIEA staff rep, to assist me at the table. This action, which was very unpopular with Management, was also extremely contentious among the FSA Executive. Kim had to call an extraordinary Executive meeting to settle the issue. The faculty

component of our bargaining team did not feel the need to have a CIEA rep at the table, but Linda did attend one bargaining session, in which we discussed staff issues only, and I was grateful to have her there.

The FSA local bargaining committee made up of Moira, David Morosan, Mandy Watts, Robin Anderson, Sandy Vanderburgh, Fay Hyndman, Chris Leach, Kim Isaac, Karen Geiblehaus, and myself, put in many long hours at the table and in writing contract language. I hadn't been interim Chair very long before I realized that to bargain effectively the FSA has to take the whole process a lot more seriously. After all, what is more fundamental to the membership than our Collective Agreement? Every member of the bargaining committee must have some kind of release to attend committee meetings and negotiation sessions. Not once was the committee able to meet as a whole. Also, most, if not all, of the contract language was written on the committee members own time. That's not right! I can certainly understand why bargaining had lost it's

Due to a lack of volunteer drivers, full-time drivers have been hired, significantly increasing the price of a round trip ticket. Anyone with a clean driving record may ride free of charge, provided he or she is willing to drive the shuttle on that trip. Drivers are obliged only to show up for their regularly schedule trip; they are in no way expected to make additional, unnecessary journeys. Should enough volunteer drivers come forward to eliminate the need for professional drivers, the cost of a

appeal for Moira, one round was enough for me. I want to sincerely thank the bargaining committee, especially David and Moira, they all worked very hard on your behalf.

And speaking of working hard on your behalf, not only did Kim Isaac help with the local stuff, she was our chief representative at the provincial table as well. With Martin Silverstein, Moira and myself as back-up, Kim spent two to three days a week at talks in Richmond through out the spring and fall. This, on top of her other presidential and teaching duties, made for an exhausting term as FSA President. We owe Kim a large debt of gratitude. Being FSA President is, for the most part, an arduous, stressful, thankless job. Evenings and weekends which are not taken up with FSA business are few and far between, and a vacation is almost impossible. I think Kim was only able to manage ten days off last summer. Add to that a year fraught with one crisis after another. Thanks Kim — not only did you see us through a very difficult year, but you did it with your enduring charm, kind disposition, and sense of humour ticket should drop by approximately 20-25%.

Vans leave Chilliwack and Abbotsford campuses at the following times

Trip #1
Leave 750 am
Arrive 820 am

Trip #2
Leave 920 am
Arrive 950 am

Trip #3

intact.

-Bev Lowen

Get on the Bus ...

UCFV is currently operating an intercampus shuttle between the Chilliwack and Abbotsford campuses on a trial basis. This service is available to all members of UCFV, students, faculty, and staff, and there is still plenty of space available. Unfortunately, unless the number of shuttle users increases, and soon, it is unlikely that the institution will be able to continue offering the service in Fall '99.

Faculty and Staff who would otherwise be reimbursed for travel between campuses may ride the shuttle at no cost to themselves, as the institution will continue to cover their in-district travel costs. Other Faculty and Staff members may book a regularly scheduled seat by purchasing monthly passes, at \$5.00/ round trip. Casual passes will also soon be available for unscheduled trips on a first come, first serve basis. (In which case, a seat is not guaranteed.)

Leave 1130 am
Arrive 1200 pm

Trip #4
Leave 1210 pm
Arrive 1240 pm

Trip #5
Leave 350 pm
Arrive 420 pm

Trip #6
Leave 530 pm
Arrive 600 pm

Trip #7
Leave 620 pm

Arrive 650 pm
Trip #8.....
 Leave 1000 pm
 Arrive 1030 pm

For more information, to book a seat, or volunteer, contact Adam Bodnar in B243 (Abbotsford), or call local 4765. Ride passes will also soon be available in the Abbotsford and Chilliwack Bookstores.

-Jeff Cuvilier

No Egg in Eggplant?

(Ed.: This received via e-mail forwarding from a far-flung correspondent :Aattributed to Peter Browne at Nortel, here are

You have to marvel at the unique lunacy of a language in which your house can burn up as it burns down, in which you fill in a form by filling it out and in which an alarm clock goes off by going on.

English was invented by people, not computers, and it reflects the creativity of the human race (which, of course, isn't a race at all). That is why, when the stars are out, they are visible, but when the lights are out, they are invisible. And why,

some musings on one of our favourite languages.)

There is no egg in eggplant nor ham in hamburger; neither apple nor pine in pineapple English muffins weren't invented in England or French fries in France. Sweetmeats are candies while sweetbreads, which aren't sweet, are meat.

We take English for granted. But if we explore its paradoxes, will find that quicksand can work slowly, boxing rings are square and a guinea pig is neither from Guinea nor is it a pig.

And why is it that writers write but fingers don't fing, grocers don't groce and hammers don't ham? If the plural of tooth is teeth, why isn't the plural of booth beeth? One goose, two geese. So one moose, two meese? One index, two indices? Doesn't it seem crazy that you can make amends but not one amend, that you comb through annals of history but not a single annal?

If you have a bunch of odds and ends and get rid of all but one of them, what do you call it?

when I wind up my watch, I start it, but when I wind up this essay, I end it.

If teachers taught, why didn't preachers praught? If a vegetarian eats vegetables, what does a humanitarian eat? If you wrote a letter, perhaps you bote your tongue?

Sometimes I think all the English speakers should be committed to an asylum for the verbally insane. In what language do people recite at a play and play at a recital? Ship by truck and send cargo by ship? Have noses that run and feet that smell? Park on driveways and drive on parkways?

How can a slim chance and a fat chance be the same, while a wise man and wise guy are opposites? How can overlook and oversee be opposites, while quite a lot and quite a few are alike? Have you noticed that we talk about certain things only when they are absent? Have you ever seen a horseful carriage or a strapful gown? Met a sung hero or experienced requited love? Have you ever run into someone who was combobulated, grunted, ruly or peccable? And where are all those people who truly ARE spring chickens or who would ACTUALLY hurt a fly?

(And finally, for all you die-hard romantics, a bit of fiction on that classic Valentine's Day pairing, sex and salmon... Ed)

Metaphysics

Notes & Notices